NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District

Community Embraces Supervisor Ridley-Thomas' District-Wide Vision for Community Empowerment

A record number of 1,200 Second District residents attended the weekend 2009 Annual Budget Summit, hosted in part by the Empowerment Congress

LOS ANGELES COUNTY – Responding to Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas' call for increased community participation and goal to make government more inclusive and responsive, a standing-room-only audience overwhelmingly embraced the theme of "change" through community empowerment at the 2009 Annual Budget Summit: *"We are the Second District, Empowered for Change,"* held Saturday, January 31 at the Hawthorne Memorial Center.

The event was collaboration between the Second District and the successful 17-year-old Empowerment Congress, a concept initiated in 1992 by then 8th District Los Angeles City Councilmember Ridley-Thomas. After his service on the city council, he continued the momentum with the expansion of the Empowerment Congress to the Assembly and Senate levels.

Already boasting a history of impressive community turnouts, Saturday's Budget Summit attracted a record number of 1,200 residents representing cities and unincorporated throughout the Second District.   With fears surrounding the state's budget problems, the event helped eased many concerns, informing residents on major provisions of the 2009 California budget and how the County of Los Angeles' operations and services may be impacted.

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Delivering his "State of the Second District," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas energized the audience, earning several standing ovations with his chant of empowerment. His address set the tone of the three-hour event, pointing out the unique ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the district, and highlighting its many assets.

"I made a promise during the campaign: to bring the work of the Empowerment Congress with its commitment to education, engagement, and empowerment to the cities and communities which make up the Second Supervisorial District," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas told the cheering audience. "We have come together to listen, to learn, to share and to lead a new constitutional-based movement for change."

To help clarify any misunderstandings about the state budget, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas invited his long-time friend and ally, Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, to provide up-to-date information to residents, stakeholders and a number of local elected officials in attendance. Los Angeles County Chief Executive Officer, William T Fujioka followed Speaker Bass' remarks, outlining the County's budget projections.

Saturday's Budget Summit also provided an opportunity for residents to voice their concerns and priorities as they related to the state budget and a public venue for offering solutions for the district's respective constituencies. In addition to the informative speakers, over 24 County departments staffed booths offering a variety of information and resources.

The Second Supervisorial District includes the cities of Carson, Compton, Culver City, Gardena, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lynwood and Los Angeles. With 2.5 million residents, the Second District also includes portions of the unincorporated communities of Alondra Park, Athens, Del Aire, Dominguez, East Compton, El Camino Village, Florence, Ladera Heights, Koreatown, Lennox, View Park, West Athens, West Carson, West Compton and Willowbrook.

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In concluding his address, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas reemphasized the positive attributes that make the Second District stand out in the County and the many things residents share in common that contribute to the District's success.

"Whether we work in the private sector or the public sector, whether we own a small business or work for one, whether we ride public transit by choice or by default, whether we own a home or rent one, we are the Second District and we are the keys to change that educates, engages, and empowers to deliver results."

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